

Sector News, Opportunities and Consultations – May 2026

May 2026



High cost of living: Impact on households

The House of Commons Library have produced a Research Briefing on the high cost of living and the impacts on households. In it, they point out that in April 2026, [79% of adults in Great Britain reported an increase in their cost of living](#) compared with the previous month. Of those whose cost of living increased, 92% said it was because food shopping had increased in price, while 80% said it was because fuel prices had increased. <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-10100>

Young people with mental health conditions are now more likely to be NEET



New analysis from The Health Foundation indicates that mental health and the rising number of young people who are NEET show a correlation. Nearly 957,000 young people are now not in education, employment or training (NEETS) – 200,000 more since 2021. Landing to coincide with the landmark Milburn interim report, their latest analysis shows mental health is an increasingly important factor. With major policy decisions on young people and work ahead, understanding the link between health and participation is critical.

Key findings from the analysis include:

- Work-limiting health conditions among NEET young people rose from 26% to 44% (2015–2025).
- Mental health conditions among young people nearly doubled.
- Those reporting a mental health condition are now three times more likely to be NEET.
- The link between mental health and NEET status is strengthening, not weakening.

<https://www.health.org.uk/reports-and-analysis/analysis/young-people-with-mental-health-conditions-are-now-more-likely-to-be-NEET>

Research Report: Impacts of public services being delivered by civil society organisations



To support the implementation of the Civil Society Covenant - the Government's commitment to resetting the relationship between the state and civil

society – the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) commissioned Ipsos UK to help develop a Theory of Change articulating the impact of civil society delivering public services. The purpose of the research is to improve cross-government understanding of whether, how, and to what extent there is additional value generated when public services are delivered by civil society organisations.

This report identifies and discusses inputs and activities, mechanisms and outcomes, and impacts. The research draws on the wider literature to provide an assessment of the evidence for each outcome and examples of the impact of civil society in delivering public services. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/impacts-of-public-services-being-delivered-by-civil-society-organisations/research-report-impacts-of-public-services-being-delivered-by-civil-society-organisations>

What charities need to know about the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025



Charity Comms have written a useful blog that helps explain how the legislation governing how charities handle data has changed.

The Data (Use and Access) Act 2025 (DUAA) updated key legislation, including UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations 2003 (PECR). The act became law in June 2025. But most of the changes it created came into force on 5 February 2026.

So what does this mean for your charity? The highlights below will help you get to grips with it (including some welcome news about how you can contact supporters with your marketing). <https://www.charitycomms.org.uk/what-charities-need-to-know-about-the-data-use-and-access-act-2025>

Searching for Life Rafts: The Funding Experience Survey 2026



IVAR (Institute for Voluntary Action Research) conducted a survey in early 2026 about the Funding Experience. The report of the survey is introduced as one that tells two stories. The first of progress, with charities indicating that grant-making has improved over the last three years, with a number of funders making the processes clearer, asking better questions, and being more will to engage prior to full application. The second story though does not paint such a positive picture, with some respondents indicating that their funding experiences have worsened over the last three years, with unrestricted funding, multi-year funding and useful feedback. View the [Searching for Life Rafts: The Funding Experience Survey 2026](#) report on the IVAR website.

UK Local Giving Report – Mapping generosity across the country



The Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) have produced new research highlighting a greater desire for community involvement in the UK. It analyses the levels of charitable giving, community engagement and local pride and found that when people engage in their local communities they are more likely to donate to charity and feel a sense of local pride. [UK Local Giving Report 2026](#).



Healthy Ageing: physical activity in an ageing society

The Health and Social Care Committee of the House of Commons has recently published a report on Healthy Ageing: physical activity in an ageing society. In it they have looked at one of the government's priorities for the NHS, to shift from illness to prevention, pointing out that despite the overwhelming evidence of the benefits of physical activity, it continues to be treated as an optional extra across the NHS and social care. Read more: [Healthy Ageing: physical activity in an ageing society](#).



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Sales, leases, transfers or mortgages: what trustees need to know about disposing of charity land (CC28)

The Charity Commission Guidance on Sales, leases, transfers or mortgages: what trustees need to know about disposing of charity land (CC28) has been updated to reflect the changes to leases which have come in from the Renters' Rights Act that came into force on 1 May. Visit the Charity Commission page [Sales, leases, transfers of mortgages update](#) to read more.



Towards a Model Neighbourhood: Next Steps on Implementing Neighbourhood Health

PPL (Public Private Ltd) in partnership with The NHS Alliance have launched a new report advancing on how neighbourhood health is delivered in practice. You can read the full report on the PPL website: [Towards a Model Neighbourhood: Next Steps on Implementing Neighbourhood Health](#).



Future Suffolk - Creating three new councils

Suffolk's councils have come together to launch Future Suffolk – a new website providing a trusted, single source of information on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).

With changes planned to create three new unitary councils by 2028, the site explains what's happening, why it matters, and how it affects you. Please visit [the Suffolk LGR Hub website](#) to find out more.



Community energy: Widening Participation

The Centre for Sustainable Energy has produced a toolkit with practical resources, insights and case studies around widening participation in Community Energy projects to encourage greater involvement of people from across their communities. Visit [The Community Energy: Widening Participation Toolkit](#) to read more.



New rules strengthening benefits claimants' rights to volunteer welcomed

Charity sector umbrella body NCVO has cautiously welcomed new government rules that aim to reinforce the freedom of people who receive welfare benefits to work and volunteer. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) intends for its “right to try” regulations, which came into force yesterday, to strengthen benefits claimants’ ability to volunteer without automatically triggering a reassessment of their claims. DWP stated: “Right to try makes it clear that undertaking work or volunteering will not automatically lead to a reassessment.” View the Civil Society [New rules strengthening benefit claimants' right to volunteer](#) to read the full article.

New Research Highlights Digital Barriers To Getting Active



New research from Good Things Foundation and Sport England highlights how digital exclusion is becoming an increasingly important barrier to taking part in sport and physical activity.

The report, Digital inclusion and physical activity: insights and recommendations from user research, explores how digital access, confidence and online experiences shape people's ability to get active, from finding information about local opportunities to booking sessions and using fitness apps.

Researchers found that digital barriers are often hidden obstacles to participation. These include difficulties affording internet access or suitable devices, low digital confidence, concerns around online safety, and inaccessible or confusing booking systems. [New Research Highlights Digital Barriers To Getting Active.](#)



Energy and Water Use in the English Countryside Report

Rural England CIC have produced a report on the different energy and water pressures facing rural households across England. Read the [Rural England Energy and Water Use in the Countryside Report](#).

No More Excuses: Affordable Rural Housing Works



English Rural has launched a new report unpicking the myth that has shaped housing policy for decades: 'Rural housing is too expensive to manage.'

It comes from funders. From government. From within the sector itself. And, according to English Rural, it has quietly held back investment in rural England for years - even as villages have lost their schools, their shops, and the key workers who keep them running.

English Rural has published this new research carried out with Acuity Research & Practice that puts that assumption to the test using Acuity's benchmarking data - 145 housing associations, around 180 performance measures. Read the full report 'No More Excuses: Affordable Rural Housing Works' by going to their website - <https://englishrural.org.uk/no-more-excuses/>



Delivering For All: Rural Realities, The Voices Behind The Data

What does it really mean to live in rural England today?

For too long, the story of rural communities has been told through statistics, funding gaps, service deficits and infrastructure shortfalls. Important though these are, they only tell part of the story.

The Rural Services Network has launched Delivering for All: Rural Realities a major new piece of research that goes beyond the numbers to capture something more powerful: the lived experiences of rural residents themselves.

Drawing on over **2,400 responses from rural residents across England**, alongside in-depth focus groups, this research is one of the most comprehensive insights into rural life in recent years.

It paints a clear and consistent picture:

Rural communities are under pressure and feel forgotten in rural policy, but remain full of untapped potential.

From connectivity and transport to housing, health, and the rural economy, the findings reveal not isolated challenges, but a web of interconnected issues shaping everyday life. Visit [Delivering For All: Rural Realities, The Voices Behind The Data](#) to read more and download the full report.

Hannah Reid, Community Action Suffolk's Chief Executive, recently asked on LinkedIn "Suffolk charities - what tier are you and are you ready for SORP impact reporting? If you're unsure, this is a really easy, quick and practical read - well worth 5 mins..."

Are your trustees ready? Preparing for the new SORP impact reporting issues

From January 2026, new rules around reporting for charities came into effect. The Charities Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) sets out what different charities are required to report on based on their income:

- Charities with a gross income below £500,000 are classed as Tier 1.
- Charities with an income of above £500,000 but below £15 million are classed as Tier 2.
- Charities with an income in excess £15 million are classed as Tier 3.

This post contains sponsored content from The Charity Spark. Read the full article please visit: [Are your trustees ready? Preparing for the new SORP impact reporting issues](#).



Board behaviours: research with CEOs and chairs of trustee

New research from [ACEVO](#), the [Association of Chairs](#) (AoC) and [nfpResearch](#) explores the behaviours, relationships and governance practices shaping charity boards across the UK.

Drawing on insights from CEOs, chairs and trustees (members of ACEVO or AoC), the research highlights that while most CEO–chair relationships are strong, this does not always translate into highly effective boards. Trust, open communication and constructive challenge are critical, but many organisations still face governance challenges, including unclear roles, difficult board behaviours, inconsistent appraisal processes and skills gaps. Visit [Board behaviours: research with CEOs and chairs of trustee](#) to read more and download the full report.

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If you show up for young people, you need to show up in the National Youth Sector Census

With renewed government focus on youth services through the **National Youth Strategy**, it's vital that organisations funding, commissioning and delivering youth work complete the National Youth Sector Census.

The Census is managed by the National Youth Agency on behalf of the Department of Culture, Media and Sport. For the second year running it is also supported by the Home Office. It creates the most comprehensive picture of youth work provision across England showing where it is delivered, who it reaches, how it is funded and gaps in provision.

Your data will help commissioners and local decision-makers target investment and interventions where they are needed most, helping to identify where there are gaps and duplication. Completing the Census ensures your organisation's work is visible and helps strengthen the evidence base behind the National Youth Strategy.

Leigh Middleton, Chief Executive, NYA said:

“If you’re showing up for young people, show up on the Census map. High-quality data underpins early intervention and it’s essential to embedding evidence-based approaches to tackling crime, reducing the risk of violence and responding to mental health needs within local prevention strategies, including the roll out of the Young Futures Panel Pilots element of the Young Futures Programme. The National Youth Sector Census is how we evidence what provision exists, what’s effective, and where investment is needed most.”

Complete the Census by 31 May. It takes around 15 minutes, is mainly tick-box, and you can save and return to it. Find out more and ensure your youth provision shows up on the map at <https://nya.org.uk/census/>



Ageing well: falls, frailty and ageism

Suffolk County Council are seeking to understand the knowledge, confidence and training needs of VCFSE sector staff and volunteers in relation to falls, frailty and ageism. Your responses will help shape future training and resources for the sector. The survey should take 10–15 minutes to complete. All responses are anonymous. Please click here to fill in the form - [Ageing Well: Falls, Frailty and Ageism – Fill in form](#) Thank you!



Department of Health
and Social Care

The Department of Health and Social Care is developing a new **Mental Health Strategy** to support people earlier and faster and help

those with mental health conditions to live a full life. They would like to hear from frontline workers, clinicians and those with experience of mental ill-health. Visit <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-to-transform-mental-health-care-with-new-strategy> to read more and have your say.



West Suffolk Council are looking for feedback on whether the

Public Space Protection Orders that they have in place in West Suffolk should be renewed. These orders, introduced under the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2012, have to be reviewed every three years. If they are not renewed, they will expire on 30 September 2026.

New orders from the Forestry Commission and additions to existing orders requested by

Suffolk Police, are also the subject of the public consultation which runs to **10 July 2026**. If you are from We